

WRESTLING FORUM

JANUARY 30, 1988

VOLUME III

ISSUE 2

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THE DREAM COMES TRUE

For those of you who have been somewhat following on on going saga of the recent "secretive" trip I made to Chicago, the story can now be told.

All the way through high school, I had wanted to be a jobber for the Gagne promotion. But I lacked the weight and muscle tone to do that. I also lacked the discipline that was needed to get that way. At my age, the only choice then was to become a manager, a referee, or an announcer.

Well, my fairy godmother appeared one night (she looked a lot like Ray Whebbe and Jeff Siegel in drag), waved her magic wand, and I got the offer of a lifetime. I was given the opportunity to become a manager for one night.

All the details from my end are chronicled in this issue's feature. Jeff will be filling you in on the creation of the show, the booking of the talent, the ordering of the wrestling ring wear, etc in either a future issue or in the yearbook, but just to give you a little background here, Jeff works for an advertising agency and he sold an idea to his client (which has to remain nameless at this point) to use a wrestling theme for their national convention in Chicago. Eddie Sharkey's Pro Wrestling America was chosen as the group on which to draw the wrestlers from. The babyfaces were to represent products distributed by the host company while the heels were representing products of the competition's. Jeff and promoter Ray Whebbe knew of my dream to do some sort of work for a wrestling show and so they asked if I would consent to be a manager.

The show came off on January 25. I got my chance to be a heel manager and work the crowd up. I even got to take a bump. Would I do it again? Read the feature and decide for yourself.

Meanwhile, we'd like to welcome you all back to yet another edition of the Forum. Last issue was the first one we used our high school helpers on, and there were a couple of bulletins that went out a page short. Sorry bout that. After some threats from Jeanette Crump of having to spend time in a room alone with David Crockett, I assure you that we will be much more careful. Rates remain \$1.25 per issue and you may subscribe in any amount UP TO six months worth. Overseas readers, your rate is \$2.50 per issue. I also apologize to readers on the East coast as your bulletins were extremely late for some reason. I don't know what happened as they were mailed out on time. Blame the postal service, I guess.

The yearbook should be ready for printing a week from today (Feb 5) so you may now start ordering it. It will contain complete results of all the year end awards that we printed last issue along with commentary by myself and readers, complete title histories for the past year, monthly updates for each promotion, top stories of the year on a month by month basis, a special Phantom of the ring complete with Ed's Phanny awards, and some added features as well. The whole thing will run between 100 and 120 pages and will be complete with a spiral binding. Cost is \$10.00 per copy. If you want it sent 1st class (normally it is sent 3rd) add \$1.00. Those of you who voted in the year end awards will find a coupon good for some bucks off the total price. Use them. Please do not add our renewal to this cost if you order the yearbook...use two separate checks or money orders. Also, please address your envelope WRESTLING FORUM YEARBOOK, Box 65, Knoxville, IL 61448. That will help in processing your order.

That's it for here...let's check out what's hot and what's not with the wrestling barometer.....

THE WRESTLING BAROMETER-January 1988

by Jeff Siegel

Welcome to the January edition of the Wrestling Barometer, the exclusive census of what's hot and what's not in pro wrestling found only in Wrestling Forum!

The 1st barometer of the new year certainly goes a long way toward identifying several current trends in pro wrestling. First and foremost, the what's not side of the ledger rang up double the number of qualifiers as the what's hot side. That, in itself, says a lot about the game's present state of affairs. We'll get to some other clear trends that the barometer picked up on in just a moment. But first, let's quickly review the procedure that's used for tallying barometer entries:

5 points are awarded for a 1st place vote; 3 for a second, and 1 for a third. Each item on a voter's list after that gets $\frac{1}{2}$ point. A minimum point total is arbitrarily decided upon for inclusion in this column so that we can focus on the month's major trends -- something that the barometer accomplished this month more than any other to date.

So, let's get on to the January results:

WHAT'S HOT

(needed to qualify: 15 points)

1. Hogan/DiBiase/andre angle - 46 points
2. Wrestlemania IV speculation - 35 points
3. WWF primetime show on 2/5 - $26\frac{1}{2}$ points

WHAT'S NOT

(needed to qualify: 15 points)

1. Nassau PPV Stampede show - $38\frac{1}{2}$ points
2. Fritz Von Erich's injury - $36\frac{1}{2}$ points
3. Current NWA angles - 24 points
3. Mathilda angle - 24 points
5. Beefcake-Valentine feud - $18\frac{1}{2}$ points
6. Orton-Adonis in AWA - 17 points

NOTES: You think the number of what's not qualifiers is unimpressive and reason for concern? Then consider this. Four other entries just missed qualifying -- among them the confusing angles involving the New Breed, and as usual, the mere existence of Dusty Rhodes. Doesn't bode well for 1988 does it?....If anyone has reson to be happy with the barometer results, it can only be Vince McMahon -- and isn't that trend truly indicative of exactly what's going on in wrestling today? Junior swept the thumbs up category, scoring well with the big angle for NBC primetime on 2/5, and raising the interest of Forum readers with the related WWF WMIV speculation which is indeed running rampant....At the other end of the spectrum

is JCP. As if Jimbo needed more problems, the Nassau stampede proved to be a complete and unequivocal failure in the eyes of smart fans and marks alike. Not to be outdone, when it comes to bad news and poor taste, Fritz Von Erich managed to climb right back to the top with a "life threatening" situation that he and Ken mantell created down Texas way. It came in a close second, though something tells me that it could do even better in the dipstick of the month balloting elsewhere in this issue. Finally, my personal favorite from what's not -- possibly since the barometer's inception -- has got to be the ridiculous Mathilda angle.

The deadline for January barometer entries is 2/22. Send them to: JEFF SIEGEL, BOX 5461, EVANSTON, IL 60204.

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

Houdini has nothing on the AWA. He never did make it back from the dead, yet the AWA has accomplished the task several times now.

Coming up on the 4th of February will be the farewell card for the Minneapolis. They are bringing back some of the old time AWA wrestlers, and we had originally thought just to make guest appearances, but as it turns out, they will actually be wrestling (we can't exactly call it that either, but it's as close of an adjective as I can think of). This should get some play on ESPN.

Featured will be Tom Zenk going up against Billy Robinson. Zenk is saying that a win over Robinson will really give him a big boost. I would hope that Robinson plays babyface here and lets Zenk have a good scientific match. That would be much more effective than him playing the heel and letting Tom get a win that way. Robinson is so well remember for his "1001 moves" that a win over that character would get Zenk over moreso than a win over a heel.

We'll also get to see Dick the Bruiser take on Sheik Adnon Al-Kaissey in a "demolition match". No, I have no idea what a demolition match is, other than maybe these two will help demolish the building. Also on the card will be Wahoo McDaniel and his partner (ready for this one?) Baron Von Raschke taking on the Nasty Boys (they will have to pay the AUDIENCE to sit thorough this one), Curt will take on Greg in a cage (how many months in a row have they run these two together), and the Midnight Rockers will take on Kevin Kelly and Nick Kiniski (or maybe it's Kelly Kiniski... who knows, who cares).

Speaking of the Midnight Rockers, they have been given the AWA tag team belts. I guess Hell must have frozen over when we weren't looking. They wrestled the Midnight Express on the last Vegas taping and I guess they managed to get some sort of win, but the referee reversed his decision (I didn't see the match). Well, the Midnight Express decided to take the now famous AWA walk, so Stanley Blackburn announced after seeing a tape of the match, that he was declaring the Rockers the champs. Tell ya what. This business of GIVING the straps away (not only in the AWA) is getting to be old ina hurry.

Did you ever wonder why ESPN keeps changing the time of wrestling, yet they still find the time for dwarf tossing, tractor pulls, and darts? Or did you ever wonder why ESPN chose AWA and World Class for their promotions rather than something decent? Here's the answer. ESPN had originally put on wrestling with roller derby to make fun of it. They keep switching it around HOPING THAT IT WILL FAIL so they can say, "Ha! Ha! We told you so!" The trouble is, it keeps getting good ratings despite their efforts to make it self destruct. With that kind of rational, the AWA and ESPN deserve each other!

WRESTLERS ARE PEOPLE TOO

We continue with a report by our anonymous TV interviewer who used to interview wrestlers after local cards. These WAPTTMs are based on his observations of some 15-20 years ago...

HARLEY RACE

There are two sides to this man. He is most respectful to those of us at the television studio. However with his friends and buddies, he seemed to be somewhat arrogant. He was particularly proud of how he was able to carry an opponent. Make that three sides, because he also had his interview persona as well.

LARRY HENNIG

He was never very talkative once the cameras were off. Once I had a friend in the studios and he was very cautious with what he said and who he would talk with (wrestler-wise) so that he didn't reveal anything.

DOCTOR X

I believe his name was Dick (editor's note: Dick Beyers) but everyone called him "X". or Doc. He would take his mask off in between interviews, but always wore it in and out of the studio. He would tell us that if people saw someone going in or coming out of the station without a mask then saw Dr. X on TV the next week they would be able to put two and two together. He also made threats to anyone in the studio who told anyone what he looked like by telling us he had the power to pull our most popular TV show off the air and give it to another station in the area. I don't know whether or not that was true, but we never took that chance.

THE MIGHTY IGOR

He was funny. He always tried to come up with something new to do on camera to make him look even more "simple". He really enjoyed the fan adoration and he loved the kids who loved him. He was quite often the butt of practical jokes, but he took it in stride.

DON MURACO

In the early seventies, he was very shy and reserved. He also was about 70 pounds lighter than he is today. He loved to talk about Hawaii and surfing and those were about the only subjects that he would really open up on and have a conversation about. He always would be telling other wrestlers that he thought he could make a good heel someday and everyone laughed at him.

COWBOY BILL WATTS

He was a lot of fun. He was what we call today, kind of laid back and never let anything really bother him. He was, though, very demanding when it came to something he wanted, whether it be something to drink, or an angle that was to be done. He was one of my personal favorites to work with.

WE NEED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS FEATURE. SEND THEM ALONG, AND LET US KNOW IF YOU WANT YOUR NAME USED OR NOT. WE'LL PROTECT YOUR IDENTITY ON REQUEST.

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

Do you remember how things were in the AWA before they took the nosedive to the minor leagues? Or maybe how things were in Georgia before the McMahon takeover in 1984? The promotions were afraid to announce the line ups for upcoming cards because people were not showing all over the place na they never knew from one night to the next who was actually going to be working of them. Well, it's not quite that bad here yet, but the Crockett Express is midway down the mountain and the brakes are failing fast.

First off, the Rock and Roll Express are history. they were fired prior to the January 24th pay per view card. As of late they had been bucking the system so to speak, complaining about angles, etc, and generally not being what was termed "team players". Both kept referring to an offer they had from New York, and finally, Dusty just got fed up with it and told them to take off. The final straw came in Cincinnati where they were to wrestle Ivan Koloff and the Warlord. They were asked to do a job, and they complied but not without a lot of four letter words. When they got to the ring, the match went a whole 10-15 seconds and Warlord ended up pinning Ricky Morton after a bodyslam. Dusty and R&R had more words in the dressing room, because Dusty wanted them to go longer, but the said, "a job's a job no matter how long it takes." Good-bye. I just wonder how this will affect the Rock and Roll Express Fan Club that they had created. No word on if they will turn up in Titan or not, but they did not appear on the last set of tapings.

Next is Nikita Koloff. he will be taking some time off due to some personal problems involving family. I have been asked not to say what those problems are, and I will honor those wishes, but be assured that the reason is far from being anything related to drugs. The actual reason is none of our business at this point. He should be dropping the TV title to Dick Murdoch, probably by the time you read this.

And finally, they are having some major problems with another wrestler who at this point has to remain nameless (if I say who, they find out who my source is and I won't let that happen). At this point, I understand there is a misunderstanding between the promotion and the wrestler and it looks as though things will be worked out. Just watch the tv show and you should be able to figure out who it is.

Which brings us to Steve Williams. He no showed the Bunkhouse Stampede Finals because he was still wrestling in Japan. Since his contract with Japan is worth some astronomical figure for just a few weeks work per year, he isn't very willing to give that up, yet Crockett wants him full time. This could shape up to be an interesting battle.

With all the defections and dissension in the ranks, it first of all goes to prove what kind of a factor that Vince McMahon can be even without a whole lot of effort. I understand that he had been calling the R&R Express and just from that, they were able to change their attitude enough to wreck their part of the promotion. Remember the Midnight Rockers and how they lasted just one day? Now that was the Rockers' fault, yet Vince knew that Verne would never accept them back if they ever did get fired. IF the Express go that route, they had better realize that they are on extremely thin ice. Otherwise they may be working for the AWA.

The recent problems also screws up some great angles they had planned. Nikita was to turn heel, but now that's out the window...at least until he comes back. Barry Windham was to drop the golf title to Larry Zbyszko (which he did, more on that later) but then he was going to take Doc's title to let Doc feud with Flair. All that for right now is in the dumpster though. I would have been great, I think.

Before getting into the Bunkhouse stampede finals, there's just a few more things to cover here. First of all, all the complaining that's been done in the newsletters about them ending matches in progress has finally caught someone's attention. I have been informed by three different sources within the NWA that we have seen the last of this. If they do have to end a match in progress, I have been promised (and permitted to pass the promise along to you the fans) that the end of the match will air the following week. Let's send up a big HURRAH to whoever was responsible for that decision.

I talked this past week to someone who attended a TV taping and they explained something that a lot of you have asked about. It seems that when they do a TV taping, there's a lot of time in between matches and sometimes the delay is ten to fifteen minutes. Dwight Borden explains that while seated in the front row behind the announcers table, he was able to see the monitors that were on the announcer's table. When there's a delay, it's because they are showing a match from another arena, or they are doing an interview somewhere else in the building. This would suggest to me that there is in fact NO POST PRODUCTION work done on the shows (i. e. editing, etc.) which would save the promotion a hunk of change over a year's period (someone I told this to agreed and put the figure at close to the \$100,000 mark). This would also explain why so many mistakes get on the air.

Another thing that has become painfully obvious, especially when they do a big show like Starrcade or the bunkhouse stampede finals...they don't let their camera men in on what's going on. This may be due to the fact that they don't want to "smarten them up to the business" and if that's the case, it's pretty dumb. With at least three cameramen, they could at least give a copy of the script to the director so he could direct the cameras for the best possible shots. Take note here...when ever you see a Titan production, the cameramen always know exactly what's going on, and you don't see them missing shots. You also don't see the camera cutting away to a shot of the crowd while something important is going on inside the ring.

Did you catch the TBS show from the weekend of the 23rd? Excellent show. Barry Windham and Tully Blanchard had an excellent match that almost went to a time limit draw. The end was an example of what kind of a genius Dusty can be when he wants to be. Barry went for a pin, but before the referee could make the fatal third count, JJ Dillon came up to the announcer's table and rang the bell. Tony and Jim went bonkers and Lex Luger came to ringside to add his two cents worth. Tommy Young came outside the ring and watched a replay on the monitor, then ordered the match restarted. Barry was doing something, arguing with someone and hanging over the top rope and Tully sneaked up behind him and rolled him into a pinning combination. Young counted to two before Lex jumped in and stopped the count. Things broke loose from there with Arn and Flair hitting the ring and they tripped on Lex. Ric revived Barry and encouraged him to help too (remember, they were trying to build up something where Barry "might" be the fourth horseman), but Barry responded by helping Luger and making the save. Barry and Lex had a reconciliation interview (they were friends in Florida BC-before Crockett) and will apparently form a tag team on some upcoming cards. Afterwards they showed a replay of the angle and I believe for the first time in the history of television sports, they showed a replay of a replay of a replay. That's for you trivia buffs out there.

The bunkhouse stampede finals took place this past Sunday night and from the show they did, all they did was let Titan know that Titan has nothing to fear in the way of losing their number one position. The show was almost one giant screw up after another starting with the opening match. The tickets all said the show started at 8 pm. They started the show at 6:30. The opening match was to have been the Sheepherders going against the R & R Express. We've already covered why that match

didn't take place. They were replaced by Jim Garvin and Sting who won by DQ after about 15 minutes. This was the only match not shown on the pay per view outlet.

The show then officially opened with Nicita going to a time limit draw with Bobby Eaton. When I first heard about this match, I thought it might be a good one. but then again, not even Bobby Eaton can carry someone who blows up in three minutes. The match was for the most part a series of rest holds with no real sustained action. Jim Cornette at ringside was the saving grace and probably the only reason I gave it a C-.

Next on the agenda was Barry Windham putting up the golf title against Larry Zbyszko. Half way through, the crowd started a "boring" chant which shows how much I know because I thought it was good. Larry didn't even go through his stalling tactics at the beginning. The end came with a referee bump and Windham going for the pin. Barry didn't see the ref knocked out, so while he's pinning Larry, Baby Doll pounds the mat three times and Windham thinks he won. he gets up with his hands raised while BD slips Larry her high heeled shoe. He hits Barry with it and the ref recovers in time to make a three count, giving the title to Larry. It went just under 20:00 and I gave it a B-. I liked the ending a lot.

Ric Flair then kept his NWA championship when he was DQ'd against Road warrior Hawk. Hawk sold very little in the early going and pretty much manhandled Flair. Ric was up to his standard of excellence, and Hawk did a decent job as well. The end came with a ref bump when Hawk clotheslined both Flair and the ref. For the next several minutes the referee assumed the prone position outside the ring while Hawk and Flair brawled inside the ring. Hawk got Flair in to a pinning situation and JJ came in with a chair and clobbered Hawk. Hawk got up and went after JJ and started choking him. Flair recovered to go after Hawk and hit him with the chair. By this time, the ref had recovered and he DQ'd Flair. It was more entertaining than I thought it would be and I gave the whole thing a B.

Next up was the bunkhouse finals. There were three noshows: Mighty Wilbur (who is out with a broken leg, legit), Doc (who is still in Japan), and Bubba Rogers (who left for Titan - see WWF report). That left eight guys in the ring for the finals. Dusty ended up with the win (surprise, surprise), and I basically hated the whole match. I gave it a D-. I didn't hate it because of who won, but I never realized how stupid a cage-battle royal is until I actually saw it. The rules were that you had to be either thrown over the top of the cage or through the door to be eliminated. Think about that for a minute. To go over the top, it more than obvious that you have to climb over yourself. To go through the door, you almost have to be standing on the ring apron on the wrong side of the ropes. Because of those two things, whenever anyone was eliminated, it was painfully obvious that they wanted to be. It just didn't come off too well, I don't think. Anyway, the order of elimination was this 1-Ivan (over the top), 2 & 3 Warlord and Animal together (door), 4, 5, & 6 Tully, Arn and Luger (door) and 7-barbarian (over the top courtesy of two bionic elbows). Sorry, folks, but this just didn't do anything for me.

On the tape (and from my "in person" report from readers) the people in the Nassau Coliseum are sitting there while the cage is coming down. They were expecting more matches since Titan always runs till curfew. Chants of "REFUND!" were heard, and quite loud. Add that to the fact that there were people who were just coming in in the middle of the Hawk-Flair match, and you've set the stage for some angry New Yorkers. The crowd was estimated at around 7-8000 and they announced a return date of February 21. They managed to tick off the people who were there... they've got people in Chicago mad...I sometimes wonder if whoever is running things isn't really on Titan's side afterall.

P E N C I L P O I N T S

REMEMBERING THE PATRIOT

Anyone other than your younger readers should know the answer to last issue's trivia question. Jerry Lawler, of course, was the artist of the Patriot strip in the old Wrestling Monthly magazine. The way you worded the question wasn't entirely right, however (diplomatic way of saying, "you blew it!"). Pat's (his nickname as you may recall was Pat) parents weren't killed in the ring. Just his father.

His reason for becoming a wrestler and "sacred mission" was to find and punish his father's ring killer "Doctor Devil". Pat finally cornered DD in a bout "somewhere in South America" and was about to kill him when "our hero" realized, "...I can't sink to his level." Here's another trivia question for you: Who was the one and only wrestler to beat Pat during the strip's run? Waldo Von Erich.

A third wrestling comic strip (besides Patriot and Amman Ra) appeared in an old, short lived bulletin (there were four issues) called Universal Wrestling. It was called "Mr. Zodiak" and chronicled the adventures of manager Mr. Z and his astrological stable. The four stories had Bobo Brazil vs Aries, Da Crusher vs Taurus, Pedro Morales/Chief Jay Strongbow vs the Gemini Twins and Moohlah vs Virgo. Zodiak was no more successful than the bulletin. His evil minions lost every time.

-JACK THOMPSON-

-Salt Lake City-

EDITOR: I MUST HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT BRUCE WAYNE'S PARENTS...

MORE ON PAT

I know the answer to the Patriot series. It was Jerry Lawler. Incidentally, do you have any back issues of that magazine? I've been trying for years to get the complete series copied. when I was a kid I loved it.

There were in some of these, inside jokes as well for people inside the business. In the patriot vs Sheik bout, the Sheik has the Patriot in a headlock and goes to jab the pencil in him, but Pat pulls away and the Sheik drives the pencil into his own arm. The patriot thinks in the cartoon bubble, "High spot!". Naturally none of the marks reading knew what high spot meant, but any smart fan does.

Another pre Patriot cartoon by Lawler had Saul Weignoroff and the Von Brauners running over opponents in a tank and shouting "Idaho!". It's a lesser heard slang term for potato or someone being a stiff. The inside joke is obvious.

I'm curious on the expose tape if these ex-workers used the name John A. Gallagher to further tick off Gagne since your name is known and disliked totally by the group.

-NAME WITHHELD-

by request

EDITOR: IF ANY OF YOU HAVE PHOTO COPIES OF THE OLD PATRIOT SERIES, SEND THEM TO ME AND I'LL PASS THEM ALONG TO THIS WRESTLER. AS FOR YOUR QUESTION ABOUT SECRETS OF PRO WRESTLING, THERE IS A JOHN A GALLAGHER WHO DOES SOME KIND OF PRODUCTION WORK ON THE MSG NETWORK AND SOMETIMES HANDLES WRESTLING TELECASTS, SO I KNOW THIS WASN'T A SHOT AT ME. I'M NOT THAT IMPORTANT. BESIDES, HAVING GAGNE MAD AT YOU IS EQUIVALENT TO SAYING THE IRS WANTS SOME PEOPLE TO PAY THEIR TAXES.

WHAT IF...

If the WWF's prime time special on 2/5 on NBC turns out to be the highest rated wrestling extravaganza in TV history, do you think CBS and/or ABC may follow suit with pro wrestling specials of their own, albeit using folks from Memphis, Crockett or even the Japanese promotions rather than Titan's stable? or will they just take the "we don't want

to get involved with that fake %*@# mentality and refuse to take advantage of what could be a ratings bonanza for those two networks?

-BOB SHEPHERD-

-Boston-

EDITOR: IF THE SHOW DRAWS THE KIND OF NUMBERS THAT I THINK IT WILL, ABC AND CBS WOULD BE FOOLS NOT TO CAPITALIZE ON IT. AND IF I WERE MR. CROCKETT AND MR. RUNNELS, I WOULD BE CAMPED OUT ON THEIR DOORSTEP, SHINING SHOES, WASHING WINDOWS OR WHATEVER IT TOOK TO GET MY PRODUCT ON THE OTHER NETWORKS. WITH THE REVENUE GENERATED BY NETWORK EXPOSURE PLUS THE ADDED LIVE GATES FROM THIS TYPE OF VENTURE, CROCKETT COULD SET SOME GOOD ANGLES AND ATTRACT SOME NAMES THAT MIGHT NOT BE HAPPY AT TITAN AS WELL AS DRAW SOME TALENT FROM OTHER PLACES AS WELL.

NAILS IN THE COFFIN

Last night we witnessed the death of the NWA in New York and maybe the first of many nails in the coffin of the NWA as a major promotion. Without going over the results (which everyone knows by now), let me give you my summary of the night of January 24, 1988 and why i vote for Dusty and company to get dipstick of the year for 1988. First, it didn't seem like they pushed the card or the pay per view on a national level like they should have. The card itself was being kept a big secret. Why? Although the matches weren't anything spectacular, they could have built a few small angles around them to generate some interest. But they didn't. On a local level, they did the usual spots on their TV show and a few spots on the radio. Surprisingly, they even got an ad on one of the Titan shows. Bu there was no advertising in any local newspapers. Considering the crowd they eventually had, this made no sense at all. Meanwhile, Titan ran ads in the newspaper not only for their card 1/25 at MSG, but also the Royal Rumble.

I'm the type of person that hates to be late, so I made sure that the six people that we went with left early enough to get there at least a half hour before starting time. Now starting time was another big screw up on their part. My tickets, which I bought right after the last card (War Games IV) said 8:00 start. They had been saying 7:00 on TV plus I knew the PPV was 7:00 so we arrived about 6:20. At 6:35, with only about 2-3000 people in their seats, Tony Shivone comes out and introduces the first match (dark). Most of the people coming in early were already complaining that it started early (the first bad sign). The actual PPV matches weren't that bad, but after the stampede started, there were comments being made about Bubba (which we know why) and Doc not being there. When Luger, Tully and Arn got out, you could actually hear and feel the interest in the crowd come to a halt. When Dusty won, he didn't get nearly the reaction he wanted or expected. After Lex was eliminated, even the marks knew Dusty would win which took all the suspense and interest out of the remainder of the match.

When the match was over, there was no indication that the whole show was over. The lights stayed down and nothing was said by Shivone at all. hardly anyone (and I mean HARDLY) left their seats because wrestling just doesn't end at 9:00 with only five matches in New York. It has never happened before to my knowledge. When the lights finally came back on, there were boos and chants of "refund" scattered throughout the place. To give you the "clean" version of the comments made by everyone we passed on the way out, it appears that they will be lucky to draw 1000 for the next show on 2/21. There were a number of praises for Titan ("they would never do that" etc). To sum up about 10 questions I can think of, i'll use just one. Why?!?! I guess they don't want to make it in New york. Why else?

-MIKE RAND-

-Brooklyn-

MEMPHIS

Angles continue to fly down here as fans are still suspecting that either Jerry Lawler or Bill Dundee will turn heel after a series of matches between the two. The latest turn of events took place and introduced Terry Taylor to the area as a heel. During a Lawler-Dundee match, the ref took a bump and Taylor ran in to KO both Dundee and Lawler. When the ref came to, he found them both out and declared the match a draw.

Speaking of turns, Manny Fernandez turned babyface after saving Jeff Jarrett from a Teijo Khan-JJ Funk attack on TV. the reason for the turn is interesting... Manny had had some heated confrontations with some fans and I'm told that he had received a couple of death threats. The promotion almost immediately turned him. The only bad thing is that Manny is back into his patriot routine, talking about how he served in Viet Nam. Well, I'm a year older than he is, and we pulled out of Nam the year I registered for the draft which was my senior year of high school. I know the military was in somewhat dire straights back then, but I seriously doubt if they would have taken a 17 year old high school junior.

Along with Taylor (who is getting great heel response down here) it is rumored that Eddie Gilbert will be in soon. Crockett didn't put an effort to keep Taylor, but I understand he wants Gilbert. We'll just have to wait a while on this one.

Hecotr Guerrero and the RPM's have left the area and are headed for the northern half of the Continental promotion.

Ricky Nelson who you may remember as a jobber for JCP is in and is getting a push. He's been received well.

Crowds here are down as well as around the circuit. No one can point a finger at a direct cause, but it may be because there is no real established heels. The northern half of the Continental promotion has aligned itself with Nick Gulas and will be running head to head with Jarrett in places like Nashville.

Finally, Mark Guleen is gone leaving only Nate the Great (formerly the Rat) in a managerial role. How long is it before the year is up and Bruno can come back and restore some respectability to the manager's role?

ARENA REPORT

WWF COMES BACK TO PEORIA

Before i begin, you should realize that I got to Peoria a little late. The box office was closed so getting a ticket to the show was somewhat of an adventure. The ladies at the door told me to go bang on the door of the ticket window. While i'm doing that, I can hear the crowd inside going "OH!!!" and "AHHHH!!". Now when i hear that coming out of a Peoria arena, I know it means only one thing...it means that I'm missing the best match of the card.

I finally got my ticket just as the bell was sounding to signal the end of that match. It wasn't until I got inside that i found out that I had just missed the Glamour girls against the Jumping Bomb Angels. All because the Peoria Civic Center closed their box office (we'll ignore the fact that I was late).

Anyway, the matches I saw: SAM HOUSTON PINNED DANNY DAVIS. Not a bad match, but certainly not a good one either. They worked about 15 minutes with quite a few rest holds. Sam won with a bulldog off the ropes. I gave it a C-.

BAM BAM BIGELOW OVER ONE MAN GANG BY COUNT OUT. Here is the transcript (with the expletives deleted) of the tape i made during the match: There's the bell. Gang whips Bam Bam into the ropes...hey! Slick tripped him up! Already! This can't end this soon! it just started! There goes Humpertink, he's chasing Slick and now Gang is after Hump! And here goes Bigelow after Gang. He gets him! Rams his shoulder into the post, hey! Did that ref just count ten? By God, he did! This match is over!"

I went back and timed the match commentary. Twenty three seconds! they must have been in a hurry to get to Chicago for that night's show up there. I gave it a ZZZ (triple Z) rating.

Next up was DEMOLITION OVER BILLY JACK/KEN PATERA. They obviously had no where to go as the match went an agonizing 27 minutes. The end came with the referee distracted and BJ with Smash in a full nelson. Fuji reached through the ropes with his cane, jabbed BJ in the throat, and Smash fell on top of him for the pin. Patera worked a light match and it looked really bad. They tried part of the time, but I can't honestly grade it any higher than a D and still live with myself.

JIM DUGGAN PINNED HARLEY RACE. Race looked tired and all Duggan was interested in doing was yelling "Hi-yo" (INCREDIBLY STUPID STATISTIC DEPARTMENT: he yelled it 23 times during the match). Race took one nice bump (stiff body-backwards over the top rope), but nothing other than that one. Race had his feet on the ropes when he was pinned, but Duggan kicked them off in a post match victory stroll around the ring. Duggan did do one amusing thing during the match...Race had thrown him out and wouldn't let him back in. Duggan crawled under the ring to the other side (he set a new speed record for crawling) and came up from behind. I gave the match a D.

MURACO PINNED REED. Don's looking real good these days and he did try to work. Reed has become of one the laziest wrestlers in the world. Reed was using a foreign object (I think it was the dreaded public hair) when Muraco caught him in a small package. Not much here, but I gave it a C- for muraco at least trying.

To sum things up, I'm glad my wife didn't go with me for this one. That way, I feel I only wasted \$9.00 rather than \$18.00. No return date was set. Attendance was 2854, pretty poor considering they had a good line up on paper and they hadn't been here since September.

CONFESSIONS OF AN EX-MANAGER
by Jon Gallagher

I'm glad I've been in a position of having some show business experience under my belt before attempting to manage a professional wrestler. For a couple of years, I toured Illinois, Iowa and Missouri as a professional magician. The reason I'm glad I had this experience is because it helped me to learn how to deal with stage fright.

The show was booked in the ballroom of the Chicago Marriot Hotel...one of the fanciest places in the city. Rooms were "just" \$175.00 a night. No expense was spared for the show. Two life sized ice sculptures of Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage were designed for the show. The agency that Jeff works for footed the bill for special costumes for the wrestlers so that logos of the respective products were printed on the ringwear. Music as set up for entrances. Special lighting lit the ring. The ballroom was fogged before the crowd came in to give it an authentic look. They found bleachers set up for them to sit in after they got in. Waiter and waitresses were dressed in Hulkamania and Macho Man Tee-shirts and other posters from the WWF lined the room (side note here...when Titan got the order for all the merchandise they shipped it out. When the hotel called back and ordered about twice as much stuff, Titan started asking questions, then refused to ship more after they found out what they were doing) and even some of the waiters wore Hulk Hogan masks.

The "dressing room" was nothing more than a spot behind a stage (where later a band would be performing) separated from the ballroom by a curtain. We dressed there and shot the bull for a couple of hours prior to the show. The faces and heels sat together, practicing moves and planning the show.

Jeff had given them an idea of how he wanted the show to go (the faces, of course, had to win the matches) but he let the wrestlers book the actual endings. Present from the PWA group were Ricky Rice & Derrick Dukes who comprised the babyface tag team known as the Untouchables (Top Guns when they work up north) and Johnny Love who was billed as the champion of the pharmaceudival business (the client was a manufacturer of pharmaceudics). The heel tag team was the Terminators Rigs and Wolf (Dan Rignoti and Doug Fisher) and my charge was Larry the Butcher Cameron who was turned into Smasher Syva for the night. Eddie Sharkey, complete with blue shirt (a requirement by the Illinois state athletic commission) was the referee.

The opening bout (there were only two) had the Terminators going up against the Untouchables (Derrick and Ricky were talking about using that name all the time...I don't know whether they were kidding or not). The Termies entered first to the song "Iron Man", the Road Warriors music, complete with dry ice fog. It was impressive and the crowd started getting into things. They booed just like they were supposed to (remember, these are salesmen...not wrestling fans and I doubt if 80% of them had ever been to a live show).

Rigs grabbed the house mike from ring announcer Jeff Siegel and starts insulting the crowd with some key phrases that he had been provided with ("Sales goals are for wimps!"). The crowd continued to respond appropriately.

Then came the Untouchables' entrance with their theme music ("The Untouchables", and it may have been written and recorded especially for this show, I'm not sure). The crowd popped. Ricky and Derrick strutted around the ring, exchanging high fives with the customers. They made it around the ring once and they tried for the second trip, but Ricky had a little problem with his long robe and he tripped, landing in some poor lady's lap. I thought Eddie Sharkey was going to have some serious medical repercussions from trying to stifle a laugh, but he made it through.

The match began in typical fashion with the heels attacking the faces before the bell. I can't tell you a whole lot about the actual match because I was watching it from a split in a curtain over Larry Cameron's shoulder and I could only see about a quarter of the ring. I know there was plenty of heat during the match. I also know that Ricky Rice has one of the best dropkicks I've ever seen and I put him in the same class with Jim Brunzell. I completely missed the ending, but I know it involved a hot tag and the end coming shortly thereafter with the faces (naturally) winning.

Now it's time for the nerves. Both Larry and Johnny were walking around backstage and I asked Johnny if he got nervous before he had to go out. He said, "No, it's not really nerves. I'm just anxious to get out there and get it over with."

I asked Larry the same question. "I don't call it nervous," he said. "The adrenaline gets goin' and it kinda stays that way. But I don't think it's nerves."

As for myself, it was the same feeling I got whenever I would be ready to step on stage to do magic. A funny feeling in the pit of your stomach that if for some reason WASN'T there, it meant a lousy show was upcoming. I was ready.

Before getting into the actual entrance and match, I think I should point out that Jeff's company paid for all the wrestler's costumes. He told me to just wear something that would make me look like a used car salesman. A trip to a local Salvation Army store netted me a pair of reddish-maroon pants, a purple shirt, a grey and purple striped tie, and a neon-fluorescent green coat. I wore a hat like Chicago cab drivers used to wear in the thirties (one of those that look like a pancake with a bill) and white rimmed sunglasses. I looked like an oversized Downtown Bruno. Actually, with the coat, they should have equipped the audience with sunglasses.

So here's Larry and me, standing behind the curtain, waiting for our cue to enter. I feel this huge hand on my back and Larry saying, "Go get 'em!" Here comes the music.

We entered to the Midnight Express' theme ("Chase" from the movie Midnight Express) as Jeff introed us:..."Introducing first, the manager, he is known as the 'Pest of the West', Sinbad T. Eccentric!" We came down the aisle and believe me...my outfit drew heat without ever saying a word. Jeff then introduced Larry as Smasher Syva and I grabbed the house mike away from him. Up to this time I had had several ideas of what my character should be like, none of which came out. What I ended up being was just an obnoxious smart ass salesman (in other words, no change at all). I'm not sure what my exact words over the PA were but they were something to the effect:..."I am not the 'pest of the west'! I am the Toast of the Coast!" and "You all can surrender peacefully now and save yourselves from being embarrassed by Smasher!" That drew a LOT of heat, so I grabbed the mike back and told them, "Okay you drug pushers (remember, they were pharmaceutical salemen), we're going to kick your butts here just like we do every day in the sales field!"

Johnny Love was then introduced and he came out with the typical babyface entrance, just like the Untouchables. He kept pointing a finger at me, and when he entered the ring, he was chasing me just a bit. I had never paid any attention to what a manager does when the opponent is introduced so the only thing I could think of to do was to point at him and make fun of his size (he is about 65 pounds lighter than Larry).

As for the match itself, I really don't remember a whole lot about it. I was too busy trying to make sure I was doing my job right. I've been studying managers since I found out I got to do this and i've talked with Downtown Bruno on the fine art of managing. The plan was to draw heat at the beginning. Build up my wrestler when he has an advantage,

and do very little while the babyface is getting his heat other than use facial expressions.

So, during the opening moments of the match, I was walking around ringside, insulting the customers. Anyone who made fun of my coat (and there were plenty) I told them that their mother dressed them funny too. I told one guy he had to stop gargling with Liquid Plumber and another that his wife was nicknamed Federal Express (blatantly stealing Jim Cornette's great line). When Larry got hip tossed early, I complained to Sharkey that Johnny had pulled his hair (Larry has close cropped hair, about 3mm long) while Larry was telling the audience that Johnny had pulled his tights ("Yeah! that's the ticket! He pulled my guy's tights!") Larry and I did the "sympathy hug bit" which drew a lot of "ahhhhh, isn't that sweet" from the audience (While I'm patting Larry's chest, I'm wondering what he has inside of it...it sounded like I was pounding on a statue).

It went on and one guy who was getting on my nerves was really letting me have it from ringside. I finally used the old Rodney Dangerfield routine where I ask him if he had any nude pictures of his wife. He got real indignant and said, "NO, YOU & *\$&(@)" (at this point I had him two ways...for the punch line and he cussed) "Wanna buy some?" I asked. About fifteen seconds later I found out what it meant to create TOO much heat.

Here I am standing there at the ring apron, minding my own business and encouraging Larry. I feel my feet leave the ground. This twerp from the audience has got some of his buddies to help him KIDNAP me. They start carrying me away from ringside, but I've got this deathgrip on the middle rope. I'm screaming my head off for Larry to come help as they pull me off the rope. I grab the bleacher guard rail as Larry comes to my rescue. At this point I start yelling "RAPE! RAPE!" Larry gets beside me and asks me, "These guys buddies of yours?" My reply was an anything but calm "NOOOO!" so he starts beating on the guys for real. They drop me (would you believe one of the guys actually had enough booze in him to make him punch Larry? Larry didn't even feel it) and I hightail it for the ring, cos I figure at this point I'm safer having Johnny chase me than these idiots at ringside. Sharkey tells me in the ring that when he saw it happening, he started having a flashback to Wisconsin and he was wondering how comfortable Illinois jail cells were. I asked him afterward what I should have done and if I should have started punching these guys myself and he said "No, because YOU would have gotten arrested for inciting a riot."

The rest of the show, I toned down my act just a little. I also worked the opposite side of the ring (yes, I'm a coward, but an ALIVE coward).

The end came shortly thereafter with Johnny catching Larry in a sleeper hold (Larry had had one on him earlier) and I started complaining to Sharkey that it was an illegal choke. I jump up on the ring apron to complain and Johnny lets it go and comes over to me and grabs me by the lapels, threatening to hit me. He looks to the crowd for their approval (which wasn't hard to get) then let the punch fly. I don't remember much about taking the bump, I'm afraid, except that I sold the hell out of it and rolled off the ring apron onto the floor where some asshole started kicking me. Larry was attacking Johnny from behind and he threw him into the ropes. Johnny came off with a sunset flip and got the pin while I was trying to crawl back into the ring.

Critique on my performance? Rigs told me that the punch missed me by about a foot. I asked, "Gee, isn't that the way it's supposed to be done?" "No," he said, "It's supposed to hit you. You sold it okay though."

Supposed to hit me? Sorry folks. I like all my teeth right where they're at at the present time. My face ain't much, my it's the only one I got. I'm going to have to watch the video tape of the match before

I can say a whole lot about it.

As for the guys in the show, it amazed me how much camaraderie they had. Everyone seemed to really care about each other. When critique was offered, it wasn't offered out of jealousy, but out of a genuine friendship trying to help another guy improve. That impressed me.

The second thing that impressed me was their attitude towards me. I had no business being there. I was an outsider making my managerial debut and I stood the chance of messing up their show. They not only worked with me (knowing full well about the newsletter and that I would be writing about them), but they were completely open with me and answered every question I had with no tap dancing or politicking. They all dropped by the room I was in later and they all talked openly about the job they thought they had done.

My daughter Kelly has a new favorite wrestler. She likes Derrick Dukes a lot and (even though she saw a tape of him and he scared her half to death) Larry the Butcher Cameron.

Some other thoughts...I don't know why someone hasn't picked up the Terminators yet. Rigs and Wolf are extremely hard workers and drew incredible heat from a group of what I call non wrestling fans. I really don't think they have the drawing power to become top line heels, but they could definitely work somewhere as mid level heels and do an excellent job of it. They would have no problem getting over and they seem anxious to do a good job. Jon Voight, who used to work as one of the Terminators has quit, and he was the one who was hard to get along with. The two working now are very cooperative. They've got about a hundred times the talent as the Nasty boys, so like I said, I just don't see why someone somewhere hasn't picked them up!

Larry the Butcher is a little "old" for a wrestler. I understand he's 38, but he still moves very well. He could come across as a top heel somewhere like the AWA or even mid level in the NWA (he's much more believable than Black Bart at least. If given the correct push, he could still go places. By the way, they call him The Butcher because he is. He's a meat cutter in real life.

Derrick and Ricky are not your run of the mill Rock and Roll tag team. As the Untouchables, they are more like a Crockett-Tubbs (from Miami Vice) team, a no nonsense, hard working combo that could slip right into the NWA to fill the void left by Ricky and Robert.

Johnny Love is a hard worker, but he's the only one that I'm sorry to say, might not have a chance very many places. Weighing only about 200 pounds, he's very small, and although a lot more talented than an Alan West, basically out of the same mold. He's basically a teenybopper heart throb, and that gimmick can't go a long ways nowadays. He goes out there and gives it 100% though.

To sum things up, I had fun and so did everyone including the guys who tried to carry me off. But it's not something I'd want to do for a living. As I said, these were not "wrestling fans" per se (although they kept chanting "piledriver! piledriver!" and went nuts when even a heel got a face into position for it...he later reversed it to a backdrop) and they wanted to kill me. I can't imagine going to a real card and having some of the looney-tunes that come there do that. I respect what managers do now, because they have to work with their back to the crowd and any kind of weirdo can sneak attack you.

Anyway, as I walked back into the factory on Tuesday afternoon, I thought, "How dreary! Imagine! I was a star last night!" Three hours later, I was running hose again, fondly remembering the dream that I had had. Because none of it seemed real. For now, it's out of my system. But maybe in another six months, and maybe if they twist my arm just a little....

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

Vince McMahon must be loving every minute of the last few weeks. He's got the most talked about network special in recent memory, he's just destroyed Crockett's New York market, he's wrecked havoc in the ranks of the NWA by signing one name and getting another fired, and he's got nearly everyone in the wrestling world convinced that Hulk Hogan is going to drop the WWF title to Andre on February 5.

But not me.

I look at it like this....there's so much information leaking out of the Titan camp these days about Hogan "definitely dropping the strap" that I smell a set up. If Hogan was really going to lose the belt, I don't think ANYONE would know about it for sure other than McMahon, Hogan, whoever was taking the belt, and a few selected others until the actual day or night of the show.

Still, the biggest thing that I've been hearing the most is that Hogan will indeed drop the belt and then have a rematch at Wrestlemania with Andre or DiBiase. He supposedly won't win it back there either, but rather on a pay per view event that is going to be done this summer and put right smack dab up against the Crockett attempt on PPV (the Great American Bash). I'm still not convinced, and I won't be until I actually see Hogan's shoulders on the mat for three seconds, but if this is in fact the case...you read it here first (or second if Meltzer is going with the same thing).

The second rumor that has some credibility is that Savage will regain the IC title from Honky Tonk Man on the same show. I speculated as such last issue and I'm now convinced we will see a title change here. I've been told that Titan's plans for the 90's will be centered around Savage. Not a bad choice.

And again from last issue, I think we'll also be seeing a turn in the Hart Foundation. Several issues ago we had heard that Neidhart would be the one turning, but I would hope that they've changed their plans and let Bret turn.

Meanwhile, this is also left over (or left out) of last issue...Bubba rogers has left Crockett and is supposed to be with Titan. The reason I left it out was because I heard it from the same Titan source who swore up and down that Crockett had filed bankruptcy. anyway, there is some contract disputes involving what the agreement with Crockett exactly was. Because of this, there is some legal mumbo jumbo going on as to when Bubba can actually start working for Titan. He was not on the last set of TV tapings that took place January 26 in Hershey, PA (air dates 2-6, 2-13, 2-20). It is also not sure what role he will be playing, or if he will be using the Bubba rogers name. This one may take some time to sort out. I understand that Vince will keep him on the Titan payroll in the meantime.

How about that Royal Rumble show on USA? According to some overnight ratings services, it was the most watched event in the history of the USA network. Wow! That should tell you something about how the Prime Time special on NBC will do. I look for it to crack the top ten programs for the week. Anyway, about the royal rumble.

The show opened with Ricky Steamboat getting a DQ victory over Rick Rude. The match went about 20 minutes and even though Rude needed frequent rests, they worked it so that it made sense to rest at the points that they did. The last two minutes of the match, they must have thought that they were Flair and Windham (because I sure thought they were!) as they exchanged two counts with almost lightening precision. The end came with Steamboat mounting the ropes for his leap. Rude saw him in time and pulled the ref into Ricky's path. Steamboat did though, cover the ref for the pin. The ref DQ'd Rude for this. I gave the

a B+, a grade that I never in my life thought I would attach to any match that Rude was in.

Next up (yawn) was the bench press exhibition by Dino Bravo (yawn). Bravo managed to get up 715 pounds (which makes me weigh in the neighborhood of 635) with Jesse's help. Halfway through, I decided this was about the best time of the night to make a pizza. Even Vince said on the air that he thought it was boring. The only purpose this whole thing accomplished was to get a bench press exhibition out of the way before Crockett had a chance to do anything.

The next match was a title match with the Jumping Bomb Angels going up against the Glamour Girls. It was a two out of three falls affair that saw plenty of missed moves on both sides. There's really no excuse for this as they been working every night with each other for the past couple of months. The angels have both put on a LOT of weight and I'm told that if they go back to Japan that way, they'll be laughed out of the building. The GG won the first fall (I missed it and haven't gone back to watch it yet) with the Angels winning both of the next two falls and the WWF ladies tag team belts. The last two falls were better than any other girls tag team match could have been here in the states, and even with the missed moves, it was all action. The final fall was won with an astounding double drop kick off the top ropes by the angels. I gave this match a B+ and if everything had fallen in place, it would have gotten an A.

Hogan's signing the February 5th match with Andre came next and it mainly just took up time. Hogan got clobbered at the end and left in the ring, but that was just to build up more stuff for the NBC show.

Then came the Royal Rumble. Actually, it was very well done and I was entertained throughout. They had Bret Hart and Tito Santana start things out and then an unannounced wrestler would enter every two minutes after that. Here's how things went: Hart vs Tito. Reed came in. Neidhart in. Jake entered. Reed eliminated. Race in. Brunzell in. Houston in. Tito out. Davis in. Zhukov in. Muraco and Volkoff came in together, but they made Nik stay out so Muraco in. Boris out. Volkoff in. Race out. Duggan in. Bass in. Brunzell out. Blair in. Hillbilly in. Neidhart out. Bravo in. Houston out. Ultimate Dingbat in. Bret out. OMC in. Blair out. Jake out. JYD in. At this point, no other wrestlers entered and the order of elimination was: Nikolai, Hillbilly, Davis, Dingbat, JYD, Bass, Muraco, Bravo, and Gang. Jim Duggan was the winner and I gave the whole thing a B just because it was never really boring.

The last match on the card featured the Islanders going up against Powers and Roma in a two out of three falls match. I don't think these teams have ever worked together and it wasn't a very good match. I think the only thing that kept me watching was the fact that I was looking for someone to really get hurt. Islanders won the first fall when Roma was counted out. He banged up his knee and they played that up for the second fall which the Islanders also won after they worked on the knee and got Roma to submit. I just didn't like it and gave it a D+.

This show was put together on some pretty short notice. It was designed to hurt Crockett's chances on Pay Per View, and it definitely got the job done in that department. It is somewhat surprising that a show of this quality (forget the bench press, contract signing and the last match) could be put together in the time that they had. I still stand behind my original decision on this month's dipstick though.

We have news from the latest set of TV tapings in Hershey PA. Not much happened, but actually, what DIDN'T happen is more interesting. Let's look at what happened first.

In the first hour, they further set up a feud with Rick Steamboat and Rick Rude. They have a match and Race and Hercules are at ringside. The heels trip Ricky coming off the ropes and Ultimate Dingbat comes

to make the save, but surprisingly, he can't. It takes Jim Duggan to finally make the save.

In the third hour, Dingbat is going against Race when Hercules does a run in and starts choking him with his chain. No one comes out to make the save, but no one has to...UD makes his own.

What didn't happen that was so interesting was the fact that none of those who are scheduled on the nBC show were on the taping. Strike Force had a dark match against the hart Foundation, but no one else appeared on tape (Hogan, DiBiase and Andre were all in dark matches). Even more interesting was the fact that ever present Vince, Jesse and Bruno were absent from the announcer's table during the second and third hours of the tapes. We had trouble figuring this one out at first, but finally came up with the answer. If something whould go wrong at the 2/5 show, the can go back and put the commentary in later rather than having to redo it. They had to do the first hour of the tapes live because the tape of that is sent to TV stations a few days before the NBC show and will air the next day. They won't have time to re do anything there so they'll probably just talk about what may have happened with no concrete references.

This week, the WWF interviewed for the part of a new manager (just what they need, right?). I think they are creating a new role and are going with a gay manager. Chris Love who many of you may remember from the old Southwest show as Tully Blanchard's manager had a tryout, but there's no word as to whether he made it or not. I understand Pat patterson is the one in charge of this operation. With the way Adrian Adonis went over in the gay role, i wonder why they keep trying it.

There had been some talk of creating a junior heavyweight championship to showcase wrestlers like Owen Hart, Sam Houston, etc, but those plans have been scrapped at present and there are no plans to revive the idea in the near future.

Finally, there should be plenty of opportunity this next week to see Hogan and company on talk shows hyping the 2/5 card. They don't miss a beat. Let's hope this time he doesn't put a million dollar headlock on anyone.

CALGARY STAMPEDE

Sometimes news from here is a bit slow coming in. A lot of that is due to the postal service between here and there. Someone the other night suggested that even phone calls come in three days late. Anyway, here's the latest from up here.

Steve DiSalvo turned babyface on New Year's Day. He had been teamed with Bad News Allen and Jerry Morrow against Biff Wellington, Brick Bronsky and Mr. Hito. There were several mix ups during the match as they just didn't seem to hit it off, but the actual turn didn't take place until after the match on the interview. DiSalvo told Allen and Morrow that noone wanted to hear what they had to say, so they attacked him. Hashif Kahn came in to make the save. Now I don't know for sure, but since Allen took off for the WWF, they may say that DiSalvo was able to run him off.

Then again, this promotion is strange. Not only do they not mind newsletter, they also promote upcoming WWF cards in their own program. I don't see vince sending any of his guys over to help pack the place for Stampede though (with the exception of the british Bulldogs who go anyway because they are married into the Hart family).

Geoff Portz and Brian Pillman continue with their feud and it's spilling over into some tag team bouts pitting Gamma and Portz against Pillman and Owen Hart.

Reported to be headed in will be Suni War Cloud, Leo Burke, and Keichi Yamada in about 10-12 weeks. Johnny Smith is negotiating to return as is Ben Basarab (who may have to promise to stay out of discos if he does). Col. Mike Kirschner has been fired. Rip Rogers came in, but left Miss Brenda behind (they don't know what they're missing and I'm not about to tell them). Also Phil LeFleur has taken off and is reportedly headed to the Caribbean.

Another feud sees Chris Benoit (who since returning from Japan has been awesome and very acrobatic) feuding with Gama Singh over the Mid Heavyweight title.

Barry Orton (Zodiak) had to leave due to some charges of vehicular manslaughter in connection with a fatal car accident last year out west. No word on how his trial is going.

DIPSTICK OF THE MONTH

When we created the Dipstick Award, we had intended to reserve it for those who did stupid things. Qualifying for the award this month would then be the Rock and Roll Express for their attitude as of late; Bob Brown out in the WWA for wiping the bloody face of an opponent with a fan's winter coat; Dusty, for winning the Virgil Runnels Jr Memorial Bunkhouse Stampede; and Jim Crockett and Dusty for letting two (or more) of their valuable acts get away.

The winner this month is however, is Titan Sports and the WWF. When a company or any kind of organization is number one in its field, they constantly have to look over their shoulder to make sure the competition isn't catching up. But when the front runner then begins to copy and steal ideas from the competition it makes the practice look bush league. In high school and collegiate sports it would be known as "running up the score" and its a practice that will lose respect for the coach or team guilty of it.

The recent acts that qualified Titan for the Dipstick for the second month in a row include the Royal Rumble which "just happened" to be scheduled for the same night as the NWA'S Bunkhouse Stampede finals. Included in the show was a bench pressing exhibition which the NWA had already announced for Jan. 30 in Greensboro, The Royal Rumble, however enjoyable I found it, was a rip off of the NWA'S War Games Concept and Bunkhouse Stampede. The fact this was all scheduled on the night of Crockett's first uncontested attempt at Pay Per View is reminiscent of the rich kid who lives down the block whose parents always get what he wants---which just happens to be one step better than yours.

Never mind the fact that Titan's show was enjoyable. It would've been just as enjoyable one night before or one night after. Besides, the way Crockett is running his promotion right now, he's set for "self destruct". He won't need Vince's help.

CLASS ACT OF THE MONTH

After being treated the way I was in Chicago by Eddie Sharkey and his PWA wrestlers, I had to be careful in not letting my emotions choose this months' winner of the Class Act Award solely from a selfish stand point. I will instead name them runners-up.

The winner this month are several wrestlers from several different organizations. Among them are Greg Gagne, Jim Brunzell and Bam Bam Bigalow for the time they took from their schedules to devote to fund raisers for Special Olympics, a non profit organization that helps physically and mentally handicapped persons become winners through sport. A tip of the hat to all those involved.

A nomination I forget to mention for the Dipstick Award was the Road Warriors for their comments about Neo-nazis which some readers construed as anti-semitic.

If you have a nomination for either of these awards (especially the class act award...there seems to be an over abundance of people within the business doing stupid things each month) please let me know. We try to reserve the class act for those wrestlers and promoters who go beyond the call of duty in the normal scheme of things. Usually we only have a couple of suggestions for this category. I would like to have the final decision on who wins be a little bit more difficult to make.

PULSE ON PORTLAND
BY Greg Anderson

The Moondogs did not arrive as scheduled on the January 16th card. The story the promotion gave was that the dogs were suspended by the NWA (I can't believe they are still claiming to belong to that group) for their actions "on the east coast". This was a nationwide suspension so Don Owens couldn't use them. I know both moondogs (Larry Latham-Spot and Bill Smithson-Spike) recently returned to Continental.

In the opener on the 16th, Mike Miller pinned Avalanche to win the first fall of a scheduled two of three fall match. Av covered Miller for a pin, but manager Abbudah Dein grabbed hold of Miller's foot which the ref saw. Av thought he won the fall and was cradled from behind for the legal pin. In the second fall, Av was slugging Miller along the ropes and the ref pulled him off. The big man kept the official's attention and Dein hopped up on the apron to tie Miller in the ropes. Av adjusted his headgear and prepared to headbutt Mike when Assassin jumped in, loaded his mask and headbutted Av in the face. The 400 pounder left as the Grappler entered and he tapped his boot on the mat. Grappler attempted to kick Assassin, but the masked babyface grabbed his leg spun him around, and both he and Miller slugged the cowed heel causing him to flee from the ring.

Next, Rip Oliver and Joey Jackson took the Moondogs place in the tag title match against Steve Dahl and Scott Peterson. The match had some great high spots. Before the finish, all four men were in the ring. As referee Sandy Barr ushered Peterson out, Jackson held Dahl as Oliver prepared to ram his taped thumb into Steve's throat. Steve moved and Rip rammed his own partner with the thumb. As Peterson dropkicked Oliver out of the ring, Dahl covered Jackson for the title retaining pinfall.

Oliver's return to Titan has been postponed till February so this explains why he is still around and slated to appear on several cards.

In another bit of news, Eddie Sharkey's Terminators are supposed to be here in February and we're not sure if they'll be faces or heels, but we'll see. (editor's note...this move may be off for now.)

Hey, the 1/23 show was great! The opener was a good scientific time limit draw between Art Barr and Steve Dahl which had several high spots. Coco Samoa got a non title win over TV champ Abbudah Dein clean in the middle to force a title shot for the following week. On a TV interview, Rip Oliver had his son with him and he stated that the younger Oliver was a fine amateur wrestler and that he wanted collegiate rules for his match with Brian Adams and Adams agreed. Brian bested Rip at every turn and when he went down into the referee's position, Oliver threw powder in his eyes and put the boots to him until Assassin, Dahl, Peterson, and Samoa made the save.

Also this night color commentator Dutch Savage presented Dahl and Peterson with a trophe, supposedly from the fans (I can smell an angle coming). On an interview, Abbudah Dein and Avalanche destroyed the trophe (Why Dahl and Peterson would leave it up there makes no sense at all). The grappler then defended his singles title against Miller. It was a pretty good match which saw a ref bump at which point Miller put Grappler in a bear hug. Avalanche came in and headbutted Mike from behind with his loaded headgear. Grappler covered Mike and Assassin ran in and grabbed the ref's arm as it was going down for the third time (hey, maybe they still are part of the NWA). As Assassin explained the situation to the ref, grappler loaded up his boot. Then Assassin turned around and belted him. Miller and Assassin then worked over Av a bit and the heels fled. Miller won via DQ.

WORLD CLASS

Pat Tanaka is in making his debut on the 1-15 Sportatorium card in Dallas. He should make a welcome addition to the group as a lot of the guys here are smaller anyway and are good workers. No word yet on what role he will play of if there is any type of feud set up for him.

Mark Lowrance must be trying to garner the worst announcer award for 1988. He's got an early jump on things as he continues to make stupid comments and not learn the names of wrestlers. On a recent telecast he played up the fact that the Simpson Brothers had been competing in tournaments around the country for the tag belts down there. Just a few weeks ago he was telling about Steve's eye injury and how he was out of wrestling for a while. Gee, Mark, make up my mid, will ya? And would you believe this guy owns a Jeep/AMC dealership in Texas? He plugged the dealership twice during a recent card, offering fans present \$100 off the price of a new car with their ticket stub from that night's matches. This gives new meaning to the phrase, "Would you buy a used car from THIS man?".

Ownership continues to be a mystery. But Mantell must have the upper hand. When ever Wild West guys are matched against World Class guys, they make a big deal out of the Wild West guys winning. This is taking a page directly from Crockett's forthcoming book, "1001 ways to Effectively Kill a Promotion". If they keep pushing those promotion vs promotion angles, they're going to manage to destroy what might otherwise be the most interesting promotion in the country today.

There's a rumor flying around that Michael Hayes has been fired by Crockett and that he will be showing up here to reunite the Freebirds very shortly. This would be great news as even though Iceman is making a great heel, I'm told the fans of this area just aren't accepting him as a Freebird. Gordy continues to do great interviews and they're almost of shoot quality. He told Lowrance that one he got the WCCW belt, he wasn't laying down on the mat for anyone if you know what I mean. Yeah, I think we know, Terry.

RESULTS FROM ALL OVER

1-13 ROCKFORD, IL (WWF) - courtesy of Ron Dobratz...Sika downed Poffo...Smash pinned Patera...Muraco beat Reed...Duggan over Race...Glamour Girls beat JB Angels...Bigelow pinned OMG...NOTES: Attendance 3000...Girls tag best on card...fans seemed irritated because a newspaper ad had promised more matches...card last 2 hrs with a 15:00 intermission.

1-14 NORFOLK, VA (NWA) - courtesy of pro Wrestling Enquirer, Harvey Cobb, ED. WINNING SQUASH MATCHES WERE: Andra Bounty, Tully & Arn, Warlord/Barbarian, Bart, R & R, Sting, and Mike Rotunda. Barry beat Larry Z...Warriors DDQ Warlord/Barbie...Nikita by DQ over Rotundo...Lex over Arn...Flair beat Hayes...NOTES: Attendance: 4000...show taped for TBS Sunday edition...Flair-Hayes in a cage...no blood and Flair won with feet on ropes...Roadies-War/Barb was good brawl breaking announcers table and almost taking out guard rail.

1-15 DALLAS (WCCW) - courtesy of Al DeVasto...Tanaka drew Jason Sterling...Grundy/Link over Tatum/Victory...Embrey drew Simpson...Perez pinned Borne...Kevin/Kerry/Adams by DQ over Parsons/Roberts/Angel...Kerry vs Iceman no contest...NOTES; Attendance 1600...Gordy no showed...Kerry bled and looked good in 6 man...taped for ESPN ad lasted 4 hours...tanaka and Sterling best match of the night.

1-17 ST LOUIS (NWA) - courtesy of Harry White...Blanchard drew nikita...Rotunda over Kendall...Sting pinned Larry Z...R&R defeated Royal/Meadows...Dusty by DQ over Murdoch...Flair pinned Hayes...NOTES: Murdoch bled heavily...won by using racquet...Cornette tried to elbow drop Dusty after match...Flair used ropes for pin again...why did TV champ and ½ tag tag team champs work the opening match?

1-15 LOS ANGELES (WWF) - courtesy of Andy Dragos...Bravo pinned Allen (C-)...Bulldogs over Conquistadors (C+)...Jake by cOR over Rude (C)...Sherri pinned Velvet (C)...Valentine over Beefy (C+)...Koko downed Iron Mike (C-)...Bass pinned Boone (C)...Strike Force beat Hart Foundation (B)...Honky Tonk over Savage (B)...NOTES: Near sell out...Randy bled in cage match vs HTM...did a flying elbow from top of cage...HTM escaped through door for legit win...Randy chased Peggy sue around after match and pulled her blond wig off...all in all, good card.

1-18 HARTFORD, CT (WWF) - courtesy of Dan reilly...
 Poffo pinned Estrada (C)...Muraco over Reed (B)...
 Warrior pinned Race (C+)...Strike Force downed Harts
 (A-)...HTM beat Savage (C+)...Stallions over Bolsheviks
 (B)...Hercules DCOR Duggan (C-)...Glamour Girls beat
 JB Angels (C+)...Bigelow over DiBiase via DQ (D)...NOTES:
 Attendance:7500...HTM-savage a battle...no jimmy Hart,
 but Hart Foundation came to help out...Neidhart at
 one point held door shut so Savage couldn't get out...
 Strike Force came out to help out...after match with
 HTM going over top, three heels got in cage and beat
 Savage...Neidhart held door shut so SF couldn't get
 in. The scaled cage from outside and heels took off.
 Thanks also to Ron Lemeiux for co-reporting.

1-18 MEMPHIS (CWA) - courtesy of Scott Bowden...Gary
 young debuted beating Don Bruise (D-)...Candi Devine
 over Bambi (F)...Nelson/Travis beat RPM's (C)...Rockers
 over Ken Wayne/Scott Hall (B+)...Dundee over Taylor
 by COR (C+)...Manny/Jarrett by DQ over Kahn/Funk (C)...
 Hennig beat lawler (B-)...NOTES:Attendance 2800...
 RPM's lost loser leave match...Rockers carried both
 world belts and Southern belts to ring (wore World
 belts) and threw Southern belts on floor like they
 didn't mean anything...Taylor took a walk after Dundee
 stole his brass knucks...Larry Hennig interfered and
 nailed Lawler to help Curt win.

1-21 LOS ANGELES (NWA) - courtesy of Andy Dragos...
 Sullivan beat Hrrricane Kid (D)...Barry beat Destroyin'
 Samoan (D)...Nikita drew Blanchard (C+)...Warriors
 DCOR War/Barbie (B+)...Luger pinned Arn...Dusty via
 DQ over Larry Z (C)...Flair pinned Hayes (C+)...NOTES:
 attendance 2500...Sullivan came in to help Larry with
 Dusty and used a wire to choke the Dream who bled
 profusely...Flair used ropes again for pin...I'm tired
 of typing that line...Hayes got a three count on Flair
 before ref realized Flair had foot on ropes.

1-23 KANSAS CITY (WWA) - courtesy of Bruce Grummert...
 Tournanment for WWA world title: Mike George beat
 Karrem Muhamed...Bob Brown over DJ Peterson (match
 stopped for excessive bleeding)...Dick Slater over
 Grizzly Boone (?)...Tommy Rich by DQ over Masa Chono...
 David Shultz DCOR Steve Ray...Sgt Slaughter DDQ Cuban
 Assassin...Slater beat Rich...George by forfeit over
 Brown who could not continue...George beat Slater
 for championship

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

Taking care of last issue's trivia question (which was already taken care of in our letters section), "Who was the artist for the comic strip "The Patriot" which appeared in *Wrestling Monthly*?" Answer, of course is Jerry Lawler. This issue's question in honor of Larry Zbyszko winning the Western States Heritage title, "What other singles title did he hold?" As far as I know, there's only one. Answer next issue.

This is Saturday morning, the 30th. Word just in that Crockett and Dusty have decided to make a new horseman. He will be...Barry Windham. There's no way to confirm this other than the source it came from which is very reliable.

Checking in on TV ratings, for the week ending January 10, Titan has climbed back into number 3 spot in national syndication behind front runners Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy with an 11.2 share. The Wrestling Network (JCP) has also reentered the top 15, checking in at the number 12 slot with a 6.5 share. Titan (Superstars, Challenge and Spotlight) is carried by 245 stations while the Wrestling Network (UWF, Crockett's World Wide, Florida, Power Pro) is seen on 187 stations.

Figures are also in for Basic cable's top series for the 4th quarter of 1987. All American Wrestling on USA Sunday morning is the highest rated of all wrestling programs. It is ranked 7th with a 3.1 rating. That means it's seen in approximately 1.26 million homes. TBS is next with World Championship Wrestling Saturday edition, at number 8 with a 2.9 which translates to 1.23 million households. USA's Primetime Wrestling comes in at number 10, also with a 2.9 share but estimated households at 1.177 million. The top 20 is rounded out by the Sunday edition of TBS wrestling with a 2.4 share and approximately 1 million households tuned in.

You may notice the absence of ESPN'S AWA Championship Wrestling is not included on this list. That's because a show had to be on at a regularly scheduled time for 8 of the 13 weeks covered by the survey.

Here's some more practically worthless trivia for those of you who are curious...I am not the 1st newsletter editor to have managed a wrestler. Tom Burke, who does Global Wrestling News Service, was a manager in Memphis at one time, I'm told also, Dave Meltzer managed Jerry Lawler on the spur of the moment a few years back when Lawler toured California with Lia Miavia's Polyneasan group. Dave was one of the few who knew what I was going to Chicago for and he had told me that I wouldn't enjoy having paper cups thrown at me. They did throw them at me, and he was right...I didn't enjoy it that much.

Sticking with a related subject, it's amazing to go back and look at some of the old newsletters and magazines to see who was working with them. Ron Dobratz used to do a mini-magazine and in his list of correspondents are Tom Pritchard (wrestling now for Continental) and Gary Juster (a promoter on the East Coast), and Davey Meltzer (a 13 year old kid from San Jose). Moondog Moretti used to be a correspondent for Ron Evans' old Wrestling Informer of 15 or so years ago. Downtown Bruno was a correspondent for Norman Keitzer's Wrestling News. The Wrestling News was the first ever magazine to carry national publicity on one Bam Bam Bigelow and the story and interview was done by a Mr. Paul Hyman who we all know as Paul E Dangerously. Seems like once wrestling gets in your blood, it's awful hard to get back out.

I got a report this morning from a satellite dish owner on his version of the Royal Rumble. See, Dish owners don't have to sit through commercials like the rest of us do and they get to hear Vince directing the show at these breaks. At one point he told Howard Finkel to look more interesting in the matches instead of sitting there like a ~~stupid~~ bump on a log. Between the 1st and 2nd falls of the girls tag team match, he attempted to learn the names of the Japanese girls and during

admitted during another break that he had butchered the names badly (noooooo!)

More information from the NWA...I'm told that Nikita has lost the TV title, but not to Dick Murdoch as we had originally thought. Are you ready? Mike Rotundo is the new champ. My source didn't know whether they'd show a clip of the match this week or next so you may have already seen it by the time you read this. Also I'm told that there will be an angle that I "will absolutely love" (yeah sure) involving Dusty and a blackmail scheme. I suppose Jim Cornette is going to come out with a plain brown envelop with pictures or something. I guess it could be interesting.

I need to apologize for the size of the print throughout a lot of this issue. Usually it's not this small, but I used a different source for reducing the regular sized print and I didn't notice how small it was until we did the paste up. Sorry.

Ray Whebbe is taking over Mat Results from Bob Closson and Jay Steele and the first issue will be out soon. Would you believe that we spent all that time together and I didn't get any information on cost or subscriptions or anything!! Well, as soon as he makes the information available to us, we'll pass it along.

The dates for the UAWF convention have been TENTATIVELY set for October 7-11, 1988. I'll be passing the information on as we get it, but Memphis has agreed to host our first convention and if they approve these dates, we're in. To explain why it's not in July or August, number one is the heat and number two, there is a mass pilgrimage to Memphis by Elvis fans during August and if hotel rooms are even available then, they go for a premium price. We want to hold the costs down as much as possible for the fans.

And for those of you keeping track, the Knoxville High School basketball team (as mentioned on Paul Harvey's noon report) is now 17-0 after an 82-41 victory last night (what was that I said earlier about running up the score?) and is ranked #1 in the state.

There's another issue under the belt. See ya on the 15th for our second anniversary edition!

WRESTLING FORM 19211

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